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USDA'S REPORT TO CONSUMERS

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE · OFFICE OF INFORMATION · WASHINGTON, D.C. 20250

October 1965

No. 22

WHAT'S NEW -- IN PUBLICATIONS AND PRODUCTS

Consumers All. The 1965 Yearbook of Agriculture, "Consumers All," is off the press. U.S. agricultural yearbooks have been published since 1844, but this is the first completely devoted to consumer interests. A giant how-to-do-it, it has something of interest to every member of the family -- the gardener, the handyman, the homemaker, even the youngsters. Its 496 pages are packed with valuable facts -- information on buying and using food, clothing, household furnishings and equipment; managing money; caring for yards, gardens and houses; improving communities; using leisure time; and staying healthy. Yearbooks may be purchased for \$2.75 from the Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C., 20402. The Agriculture Department has no copies for general distribution.

To Keep In The Cold. The next refrigerator you buy may be insulated with, of all things, corn starch. U.S. Department of Agriculture scientists have found a way to make rigid urethane foam (the kind used in insulating refrigerators and freezers) from cereal starch. The new insulating material is comparable in both cost and quality with other polyethers now in use. Currently, nearly 65 million pounds of polyethers are being used; by 1968 consumption should reach 100 million. If only 10 million pounds of this were made of corn starch, it would use up 100,000 bushels of corn.

Floating on Wool. A sheep skin may be a coat or a diploma -- or a bedpad. In hospitals, doctors and nurses have found sheep skins just the thing for bed-ridden hospital patients. They prevent bedsores. The wool pile readily absorbs perspiration and provides good distribution of body pressure. Use of these bedpads has been limited, however, because they required special laundering. Now, a new tanning process developed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture permits the skins to be washed in automatic washers -- with soap, moderately warm water and a disinfectant.

FOODS IN GOOD SUPPLY

That Thanksgiving Turkey. Invite a crowd in for Thanksgiving dinner. There's going to be lots of turkey on the market, and more big birds than ever before. USDA poultry specialists forecast the second largest turkey crop in history.



Pick the Plentifuls. Look for plenty of apples this fall -- for bobbing and bribing, and lots of good eating. In October, apples will head the U.S. Department of Agriculture's List of Plentiful Foods. A harvest of more than 130 million bushels is expected. Also on the October list are broiler-fryers, turkeys, cheese, rice, onions, shelled pecans, dried prunes and frozen orange juice.

HOUSING

Loans to Those Who Need Them. Nearly 16,000 low-income families borrowed over \$133 million from Farmers Home Administration during fiscal 1965 to improve their homes or build new ones. Loans to elderly people were up 26 percent. In addition, \$2 million was advanced to commercial builders for construction of rental units for senior citizens in rural communities. Loans by FHA go only to those unable to obtain credit from private lenders at reasonable rates and terms.

Housing for the Elderly. "Multi-Unit Retirement Housing for Rural Areas" is its title -- but it's a booklet that's equally suitable for use in suburban areas. And it contains hundreds of helpful hints for planning homes for older people. The information is presented as a guide for architects, engineers and builders. Included are 11 floor plans for 1 and 2-bedroom units. Each is designed with the special needs and limited budget of the retiree in mind. For a free copy of this booklet, send a postcard with your name and address to: Office of Information, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C., 20250. Ask for "Multi-Unit Retirement Housing for Rural Areas," AIB-297.

AT THE GROCERY STORE

Dieters Delight. Have you tried the new low-fat milk -- or perhaps it's labeled 2 percent milk, fortified milk or low-fat skim in your community? Whatever the name, it's proving to be a big seller. Dieters love it, because it has fewer calories than whole milk and a better taste and consistency than skim milk. According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, consumption of this relatively new product has recently skyrocketed. If it continues at the rate of the past few years, sales of low-fat milk could total 1.8 billion quarts by 1970. That'll be nearly 9 quarts for every man, woman and child in this country.

Help in Buying Mixed Nuts. Look for the words "U.S. Extra Fancy" and "U.S. Fancy" on packages of mixed nuts in the shell. They're the mark of a good mix. Used for the first time this fall, these U.S. Department of Agriculture grademarks promise at least 10 percent and not more than 40 percent of each of five kinds of nuts in the package. They'll give you a good selection of top-quality almonds, pecans, filberts, Brazil nuts and walnuts -- for happy holiday munching.

The Odds Are Two to One. For every new food that hits the market two more never see your grocer's shelf. And only 500 of those you do see each year survive until the next. Why not? A USDA study of convenience foods -- in Philadelphia, Milwaukee, New Orleans and Oakland -- shows new products often price themselves off the market. Or, the competition's too keen and distribution poor.

PESTICIDES

Symbol for Pesticide Safety. A new symbol (right) designed to encourage the safe and effective use of pesticides has been created by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. It dramatizes the need to protect our farms with their quality food and fiber products, our homes and gardens, our forests and wildlife, and our water and other natural resources from both the ravages of pests and the hazards resulting from improper use of pesticides. The symbol is suggested for reproduction in newspapers, magazines and newsletters; in pamphlets, leaflets, fact sheets and other publications concerning pesticides and pest control. A sheet of adhesive copies of the symbol in sizes from 1 inch to 2-3/4 inches for convenient use in printed matter and elsewhere is available upon request from the Office of Information, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C., 20250.



Use Pesticides Safely
FOLLOW THE LABEL

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Sex and the Carpet Beetle. Black carpet beetles -- who dine on food, feed and furs as well as woolens -- may not have it so good in the future. U.S. Department of Agriculture entomologists have them on their list -- as pests that can be controlled biologically. The scientists have been able to collect the natural sex attractant from female beetles. Now they hope to isolate, identify and synthesize the chemicals in it and produce a similar attractant that will lure male beetles to their death.

OBSERVANCE

A Serving of Good Health. October 10 through 16 has been proclaimed National School Lunch Week by President Johnson. The theme this year: "School Lunch Serves Child Health." And there's no question about that. Each child who buys a Type-A lunch, the kind served under the National School Lunch Program administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, receives 1/3 to 1/2 his daily nutritive requirements. For this, he pays about 25 cents -- slightly more -- or less if he hasn't the money. This year 71 million youngsters are expected to take advantage of this bargain in good health. Is your child one of them?

PROGRAM AIDS

The Many Faces of Extension Home Economists. There's an Extension home economist in almost every county in the United States. You may know her as a workshop leader, the person who organized your homemakers' group, the girl who writes the food and home column in your local paper, or perhaps the guest speaker at your club or the star of a TV show. Extension home economists are many people; they wear many different hats. And they are there to help you. If you'd like to know more about them and what they do, send a postcard with your name and address to: Office of Information, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250. Ask for PA-657, "Extension Home Economics -- How It Works." Or, better yet, visit or call the Extension home economist in your county. The local post office can tell you where to find her.

Pests or Plenty? This is the questioning title of a new 13-minute color movie produced by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Focusing on a suburban family cookout, this consumer-oriented film moves from patio to farm, ranch, laboratory and supermarket. It graphically demonstrates how modern, safe pest control tools and techniques effectively protect our agriculture against hungry pests and help assure us an abundant supply of quality food products. The movie is designed for showing before club groups. Prints are available on loan from state university film libraries or by writing to Motion Picture Service, Office of Information, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C., 20250.

FARM FACTS

The Price of a Piece of Land. Farm land, much like land in urban areas, is rapidly increasing in value. According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the market value of U.S. farm real estate is up 6 percent from a year earlier. In the past 10 years, the average value of U.S. farms has risen 141 percent -- to \$52,200. Biggest increases are in Florida, Arizona, Arkansas, Georgia, Mississippi, and California. While the average West Virginia farm is worth \$15,000, a typical Arizona farm is valued at \$445,400. The difference, of course, is in the size of the farm, the type of agriculture, and land values. For the nation as a whole, the average price of an acre of farm land is \$146.

The Ubiquitous Soybean. Bet you've never seen a soybean. Yet you use and eat them every day -- in all sorts of ways, in all sorts of things. Soybeans are used in mayonnaise, salad and cooking oils, margarine, sandwich spreads, candies and the high-protein, low-fat liquid foods that weight-conscious Americans consume in hundreds of gallons each year. They go into soaps and shaving creams; paints, varnishes and lacquers; in printing inks and vitamins, linoleum and putty. Soybeans now rank third among U.S. cash crops. This year, the U.S. Department of Agriculture expects a harvest of over 860 million bushels. Twenty years ago, soybean production was only 193 million bushels.

SOME STATISTICS

East-West Calorie Countdown. If you think communism has more to offer than the U.S., think of your stomach. It wouldn't fare nearly as well under the Soviets, the U.S. Department of Agriculture notes. In East Germany, which is the best fed of all the Iron Curtain countries, the average caloric consumption during 1959-61 (that's the latest date for which USDA statisticians can figure) was 3,000 per day. Nearly half of those calories was in cereal products, potatoes and pulses (peas, beans, lentils, etc.). Americans that same year averaged 3,410 calories a day. Over 30 percent of our diet was in animal protein. Potatoes and cereals accounted for only 3 percent.

The Cost of Cars. The average farm family now spends more on cars than on clothes, the U.S. Department of Agriculture reports. Sixteen cents out of every dollar spent in 1961 went to pay for the purchase and operation of automobiles and trucks.

SERVICE is a monthly newsletter of consumer interest. It is designed for those who report to the individual consumer rather than for mass distribution. For information about items in this issue, write: Jeanne S. Park, Editor, SERVICE, Office of Information, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250